

Application No. 09/348,495
Amendment dated July 12, 2004
Reply to Office Action dated May 11, 2004

Attorney Docket No. 040070-438
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REMARKS

Claims 1-28 are pending, with claims 1, 12, and 22 being in independent form. Entry of the present amendment would result in claims 1, 4-6, 12, 15-17, and 28 being amended, and claims 3 and 14 being canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

At the outset, the Applicant acknowledges the continued indication of allowable subject matter in the final Office Action.

In the final Action, claims 1, 2, 8, 12, 13, 19, 25, and 26 are rejected for anticipation by U.S. Patent No. 6,393,013 to Masui et al. ("Masui"). Claims 10, 11, 20, and 21 stand rejected for obviousness over Masui. The Applicant believes entry of this Amendment will overcome the stated rejections and will place the application in condition for allowance.

For example, the final Action indicates that claims 3 and 14 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of their respective base claims and any intervening claims. Entry of this Amendment would result in claim 1 being amended to incorporate all of the features of claim 3 and the cancellation of claim 3. Similarly, entry of the Amendment would result in claim 12 being amended to incorporate all of the features of claim 14 and the cancellation of claim 14. Other claims depending from either of claims 3 and 14 would be amended to depend from claim 1 or claim 12, respectively. The Applicant reserves the right to file claims directed to the subject matters of original claims 1 and 12 at a later date.

For the foregoing reasons, the Applicant believes entry of this Amendment would put the application in condition for allowance. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the Amendment be entered, and a Notice to this effect be provided. If any questions remain, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P.

By: 

Stephen J. Pytran
Registration No. 45,846

P.O. Box 1404
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1404
(919) 941-9240

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Jennie Snead